

Florence, New Jersey 08518-2323
September 6, 2018

A regular meeting of the Florence Township Board of Adjustment was held on the above date at the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, NJ. Chairman Zekas called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. followed by a salute to the flag.

Secretary Lutz then read the following statement: "I would like to announce that this meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been provided to the official newspapers and posted in the main hall of the Municipal Complex."

Upon roll call the following members were found to be present:

Brett Buddenbaum	Joseph Cartier
Anthony Drangula	Larry Lutz
Anant Patel	Lou Sovak
B. Michael Zekas	Margo Mattis
Dennis Puccio	

Absent: None

Also Present: Solicitor David Frank, Engineer Hugh Dougherty

APPLICATIONS

- A. **Application ZB#2018-03** submitted by Kathleen Lengel, 379 Bennett Street, Roebling, for front-yard setback to construct a front porch on property located at 379 Bennett Street, Florence Township
Block 146.04, Lot 4.02

Chairman Zekas asked Mrs. Lengel to come forward. She was sworn in by Solicitor Frank.

Solicitor Frank said before this application is heard he wanted to say something. When he came into the meeting room he met the applicant and enjoyed observing the interaction between the applicant and some of the board members. The Lengels taught some of the board members. The fact that Mr. Lengel, a relative of the applicant, taught many of them, is not a disqualifying conflict of interest. This is the kind of conflict that necessarily arises when there is a town where people know each other. That mere fact is not disqualifying for any board member. He added that if there is a current and on-going relationship with either of the Lengels where there are frequent social interactions and are involved with any business interactions that would be different.

Chairman Zekas asked Mrs. Lengel to provide an overview of what was being proposed and why the variances are required. Mrs. Lengel said she would like to construct a front porch that would be 20' long and 8' deep. It would be made of Trex, with a white vinyl railing. There is already an "A" line roof and the contractor would build it out from there so it will look like it has always been there. Chairman Zekas confirmed it is a front porch addition to the front of the

home. Mrs. Lengel said that is correct and added it would have a roof. Chairman Zekas said he assumed the porch will encroach into the front-yard setback. Mrs. Lengel said a 25' setback is required but it would be 16.5' with the porch. Chairman Zekas asked if there was currently a front porch on the house. Mrs. Lengel said there is not. Chairman Zekas stated the 8' extension would be the extent of the construction.

Chairman Zekas said it seemed to be pretty straightforward. Everyone had copies of the plan and survey to review. Chairman Zekas asked if the roof would go beyond the 8' out. Mrs. Lengel said it would not.

Chairman Zekas asked if there were any questions from any board members. Member Drangula said it looked like the impervious ground coverage would not be impacted because there is already a concrete sidewalk. He asked the engineer if there was any impact. Engineer Dougherty said he prepared a letter dated August 29, 2018. Everything that was required was submitted and the application was complete. He reviewed the plan and the lot is smaller than what is required. There is a 10,000 sq. ft. lot requirement but this lot is 8,855 sq. ft. That is an existing non-conforming condition and not something that is before the board at this point. Regarding impervious coverage, there are a couple things. He does agree that it is not increasing significantly with the placement of the deck because there is a concrete pad. The plan submitted by Robert Stout showed that without the porch addition the coverage is at about 28% coverage. The zone permits 20%. If there is a deck/porch an additional 5% is permitted. A variance for the impervious coverage is also needed.

He said unfortunately his letter did not reach the applicant because he addressed it Florence, NJ instead of Roebling. He provided it this evening, so the applicant did not have the benefit of reviewing prior. He would like to solicit some testimony from the applicant. The applicant already testified the porch would be similar in character to the house. Engineer Dougherty asked if there were similar porches on neighboring homes. Mrs. Lengel said there are only three homes on the street and it is a dead-end. The other two homes don't have a front porch, but at the corner of the street there is a house with a wrap-around porch. Engineer Dougherty said there would be a minimal visual impact because it would only be visible to the residents of the street. Engineer Dougherty asked if it would be aesthetically pleasing for the neighborhood. Mrs. Lengel said she believes it would add to the value of her house and would be very pleasing to look at. Engineer Dougherty said he agreed and it would be an intrinsic value both to the neighborhood and the street in general. Where the driveway is located in relation to where the porch will be, there is no hinderance of site distance. He noted he visited the property and confirmed this. As far as grading and drainage, the impervious coverage is not really increasing much so the run-off would not be increasing. There would also be no grading changes to the property. Mrs. Lengel concurred.

Engineer Dougherty said he noticed some landscaping in the area. He asked if it was going to be relocated. Mrs. Lengel said her son-in-law has already agreed to move the landscaping for her. Engineer Dougherty said the applicant addressed all of the questions he had for the Board's consideration and explained it is a C2 variance as opposed to a C1. A C1 would be a hardship. A C2 is measuring the benefits against the negatives. He stated this application provides an increase in aesthetics, it would improve the overall look of the neighborhood and the street. It is consistent with the area. It is a neighborhood that has grown over time so the setbacks are not all at 25'; they are staggered and this would add to that. He thinks it would be attractive to

on-lookers and that there really isn't any negative impact related to the placement of the porch. He stated the lot is undersized, but that is existing; however, there needs to be a variance for the front yard setback as well as a variance for the lot coverage.

Engineer Dougherty noted the applicant provided a very detailed survey from her engineer and it enabled him to go through and dimension what was there. The original lot coverage included sheds. He noted if it were a conforming lot, it would be very close to fitting into the maximum lot coverage allowed including the deck, patio and sheds.

Solicitor Frank said he didn't have much to add; Engineer Dougherty covered it very thoroughly. Because it is an existing undersized lot it could also be considered a hardship under C1. He agreed that it can also be a C2. Clearly it is an aesthetic improvement and it is an amenity that adds something to the character of the neighborhood. Given where it is and the nature of the neighborhood, there are no detriments.

It was the Motion of Lutz, seconded by Buddenbaum to open the meeting to the public regarding Application ZB#2018-03. Motion unanimously approved by all those present.

George Lengel, 379 Bennett Street, noted he taught many of the people here this evening. He said there is no conflict.

It was the Motion of Patel, seconded by Lutz to close the public hearing. Motion unanimously approved by all those present.

Chairman Zekas said he felt that everything that needed to be was discussed. The applicant is requesting a front yard setback variance and a bulk variance for the increase in lot coverage for the construction of a front porch. It is a common amenity and something that the residents can enjoy.

It was the Motion of Lutz, seconded by Puccio to approve Application ZB#2018-03.

Upon roll call the Board voted as follows:

YEAS: Buddenbaum, Cartier, Drangula, Lutz, Patel, Sovak, Zekas

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

RESOLUTIONS

- A. **Resolution ZB-2018-08:** Approving application of Jeffrey Dzurko for Minor Subdivision and Use Variance on property located at 1021 Potts Mill Road, Florence Township. Block 166, Lot 12.03.

Solicitor Frank said there was discussion at the hearing about the garage being a principal. That meant it was no longer subject to the height restrictions. The expectation is that some day in the future it will become an accessory, in which case it is too tall. While writing the resolution he treated it as subject to the accessory standard and that the board granted a variance for the height. He wanted the board to be aware of that.

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It was the Motion of Lutz, seconded by Buddenbaum to approve Resolution ZB-2018-08.

Upon roll call the Board voted as follows:

YEAS: Lutz, Buddenbaum, Drangula, Mattis, Puccio, Zekas

NOES : None

B. Resolution ZB-2018-09: Approving application of Parth Patel for a rear yard setback to enlarge an existing deck on back of house on property located at 304 Seyebe Lane, Florence. Block 165.09, Lot 3.

It was the Motion of Buddenbaum, seconded by Lutz to approve Resolution ZB-2018-09.

Upon roll call the Board voted as follows:

YEAS: Buddenbaum, Lutz, Drangula, Mattis, Puccio, Zekas

NOES : None

MINUTES

It was the Motion of Lutz, seconded by Buddenbaum to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 9, 2018. Motion unanimously approved by all those present.

OTHER BUSINESS

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Patel, seconded by Lutz to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Motion unanimously approved by all those present.

/ak

Larry Lutz, Secretary